

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 6227

C 242 L 08
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing support and resources to outer coast marine resources committees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review

Background: Congress created the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (Conservation Initiative) in 1998 as a conservation and restoration program serving the northwest portion of Puget Sound. The Conservation Initiative is charged with establishing community-based marine stewardship, conducting citizen-driven scientific studies on marine species and their habitat, and restoring marine habitat.

The Conservation Initiative has established seven Marine Resource Committees (MRCs), one for each of the following counties: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom. Each of these MRCs are citizen-based, with representatives from local government, tribal government, and the scientific, economic, recreational, and conservation communities.

In 2007 the Legislature authorized all outer coast counties to establish MRCs for their coastal areas, along with certain Puget Sound counties. The statutory purpose of state MRCs is to address, utilizing sound science, the needs of the marine ecosystem local to the county initiating the MRC. County legislative authorities may create MRCs, and citizens may also petition the county to create an MRC.

State MRC membership must reflect balanced representation from local governments, scientific experts, economic interests, recreational interests, environmental interests, and tribal representation. Generally, county legislative authorities determine MRC membership.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is the coordinating entity for outer coast MRCs.

Salmon recovery lead entities are local, watershed-based organizations that prioritize and submit to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board habitat protection and restoration projects for funding consideration.

Summary: The outer coast marine resource committee program (program) is created to support outer coast MRCs. As director of the program, DFW must: (1) provide each outer coast MRC with a coordinator to support the committee's work; and (2) distribute grants to outer coast MRCs to support projects that benefit coastal marine resources.

An MRC must annually report its activities and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. Additionally, DFW must develop grant procedures and processes, which may include annual funding allocations for each MRC.

MRC membership must include representation from local residents. In lieu of creating a new entity to serve as an outer coast or Puget Sound MRC, a county legislative authority may designate a salmon recovery lead entity organization to also serve as the MRC. However, a county may only make this designation upon consent of the lead entity organization.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	97	0

Effective: June 12, 2008